

A
PLATFORME,
MADE FOR THE
PROOFE OF
Gods prouidence:

That is, for examining of the truth
of this doctrine, whether God
by his prouidence rule all
things generally, and e-
very creature and
action parti-
cularly.

By Arthur Dent



LONDON.

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PROOF OF

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in the

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the prooffe of Gods prouidence:
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of this doctrine, whether God by
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ture, and action parti-
cularly.



I were to be wished
that all Christians did
vnderstand, that, which
with mouth they con-
fesse, when they rehearse
the articles of their faith,
gathered out of the Apostles doctrine.

The Confession is breife, and euery
made in it very significant, and well
vnderstood, would roote all heresies out
of our mindes.

The principles of Religion are therein
 containned, and if hee bee but a weak
 Philosopher, that is ignozant in the
 principles of Philosophie, and if it bee
 shame for all artificers to bee ignozant
 in the groundes of those arts they pro
 fesse, it is a greater shame for be Christi
 ans to make shew of christianity, and
 yet to bee ignozant in the rudiments
 of our Religion.

I would to God that every one, that
 hath the name of a christian, did thorough
 ly vnderstand, and were fully instructed
 in them; then needed not I labour
 much, for the prooofe of this doctrine.

For every one of vs, when we do con
 fesse God to bee almightie, do acknow
 ledge that hee by his providence ruleth
 euery thing: and that we may know
 what wee say, I purpose chiefly to handle
 these two points:

First, that Christ the Sonne
 of God, hath the selfe same providence
 that God the Father hath: Secondly
 that the providence of God, both gou
 uerne all things generally, and rule
 speciall thing specially.

And yet in handling these two, I

not recite all that may be said touching
this matter, but shely touch some chiefe
pointes, summarily which may helpe
you the better to vnderstand the large
and learned tract, that many notable
men haue witten hereof. For the first :



That Christ the Sonne of God
doth gouerne all things as well, as
God the Father, is proued by
reason, example, and
aucthoritie.

By reason, if God by his wisdome
made the worlde: that is, if that the
eternall wisdome of God, which is his
worde, the euerlasting Sonne of God,
was present with God, when he made
the worlde: he is also with him in gouer-
ning the worlde: but he was with God
when he made the worlde, therefore he is
with him in gouerning of it.

The equity of the first proposition is
grounded

grounded vpon most strong reason:

For as God created the worlde by his wisdom, so it is not to be beleued, that God gouerneth the worlde without his wisdom: otherwise he should gouerne by chance.

The second proposition is proued by the testimony of the Apostle H ebr. 1. by whom also he made the worldes.

By example, Gen. 48. verse 13. 14. 15. Then tooke Ioseph them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Israels left hand, and Manasseh in his left hande towards Israels right hand, so he brought them vnto him.

But Israell stretched out his right hand, and laide it on Ephraims head, which was the yonger, and his left hand vpon Manassehs head (directing his handes on purpose) for Manasseh was the elder.

Also he blessed Ioseph, and said, the God before whom my fathers Abrahā, & Izack did walk, the God which hath fed me all my life longe vnto this day.

In which wordes Iacob acknowledgeth Gods prouidence to stretch to particuler men, euen to himselfe.

Then

Then it followeth as vers: 5. 16. The Angell which hath deliuered me from all euill, blesse the children, and let my name be named vpon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham, and Isaac, that they may growe as fith, into a multitude in middes of the earth. In these wordes, the holy Patriarke Iacob sheweth that particular prouidence to the Angell, which in the former verse hee had giuen to God: And that by the name of Angell he vnderstandeth no creature, is hereby proued, in that he affirmeth, that this Angell had power to blesse: saying to him, Blesse the children: Hee then is the Angell, whome Iacob was wont to call, the Angell of the Lord, that is the Sonne of God.

Therefore in this place Iacob attributeth a prouidence vnto all things and persones, to the Angell: that is the Sonne of God, as well as to God the Father.

By authoritie Iohn. 5. verse 17. My Father worketh and I worke: This worke that Christe speaketh of, is not to be vnderstood of the creation onely, but also of governing of al things created.

For this particule (hitherto) sheweth that he ment not onely that first worke of his in creating all things with his Father, but also another worke, which he dayly exerciseth, which cannot be understood of any ether, then of gouerning all things with his Father.

But here wee must obserue this rule, that the workes of the Trinitie are vndecided.

Therefore that which is the Fathers worke, is the worke also of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost.

That the Sonne of God doeth the same workes that the Father doeth, is alreadye proued: the same is to be affirmed also of the holy Ghost, by the warrant of Gods worde, as by that I reade in the 139. Psalme Whether shall I goe from the Spirit? or whether shall I flie from thy presence? If I ascende into Heauen, thou art there: If I lie downe in Hell thou art there: let me take the winges of the morning, and dwel in the vttermost partes of the Sea, yettether shall thine hand leade me, and thy right hand holde me: Thus is the first point breifly proued, that
Christ

Christ the Sonne of God , and the holy
Ghost, doe governe all things as well as
God the Father.

Now to the seconde: that God by his
prouidence governeth all and euery
thing.

There are very many that can wil-
lingly graunt , that God by his prou-
idence governeth all things in generall,
but that euery particular thing is ruled
by the same, they denie: with these men
therefore I minde to deale somewhat
largely , though not so learnedly , as the
cause requireth: (& who is able to handle it
worthily?) Philosophers haue in this
point had sundry opinions: Epicurus
said , that all things were ruled by
chaunce and fortune , and that God li-
ued idly, and at ease in the Heauens:
which opinion, as impious , all men in
wordes condemne , and yet so we liue
that our liues are euident proofes a-
gainst vs , that in heart and soule
wee embrace it.

For surely if wee thought better
of God then Epicurus did , wee
would not walke so directly in Epicurus
pathes as we do , or liue so licentiously
as

as though God regarded vs not.

The Peripatetickes, and other sort of Philosophers, broched another opinion, teaching that those things which are aboue the Heauens, are moued, guided, and gouerned by God himselfe: but those things that are vnder the circle of the Moone, are gouerned partly by chance and fortune, partly by the counsailes and deuises of men, and partly by a brutish, or sencelesse force of nature.

There is a third opinio of the Stoickes, which is that all things are ruled by fate or destinie, that is by a secret order, and linke of causes: in which chaine, all things are so surely tied, that both God himselfe and man are straighted within those boundes.

This was a very dainty opinion in the iudgement of the Poets: who to excuse the weaknesse of their God Iupiter, fained that he wept, for that he was so hindered by the force of destinie, that he could not set Sarpedo at liberty.

The fourth opinion is Platoes, who graunteth that God by his prouidence ruleth all things in generall, which afterward God commiteth to petty Gods,

halfe

halfe Gods, and Demits, who haue the charge and care of particular things: From these foure opinions, spring all other whatsoeuer, touching Gods prouidence: and there is no one opinion, which may not easily be reduced to one of these.

But some of vs (euen of vs Christians) flying one danger, runne into another: and soz that they dare not deny that God by his prouidence ruleth all things, yet will they not graunt, that by it, he gouerneth euery particular thing, least they shouldt hereby be driuen (as they thinke) to some absurdities: thus whilst they would auoide absurditie, they commit impiety and fall away from the truth most dangerously: But farre be this from your heart (Right worshipful) and that it may neuer possesse you: auoide the cause that worketh it in them, which is ignorance of the word of God: and soz that God in great mercy hath kindled in your heart a desire of knowledge, quench not that godly desire in you, but pursue hotely with hartly and seruent prayer, after knowledge, and you shall finde it. And if you shall finde it,

it, you shall certainly know, that there will no absurdity be enforced upon any doctrine grounded upon Gods worde, and that you need not feare this doctrine, as they do: I wil first discourse briefly of the truth of it, and will proue, that God gouerneth by his prouidence all things generally, and euerie particular thing particularly: then will I answer to all those chiefe objections which are brought against it, and by which some haire men thinke to make the doctrine absurde.

To the first:

For that this argument hath bene diuerfly handled, and men haue bene verie curious in discoursing thereof: especially since what way soeuer they winde themselves, many absurdities do seeme to follow them: it will be best I thinke so, me to keepe me in the high beaten way, least seeking by wayes, I wander out of the way: I meane to discourse so of this doctrine, as I am taught in the worde of God, and then diligently to remooue all those things whatsoeuer they be, not beleming y^e most pure nature of God, which in y^e iudgement of men, shall seme hereof to follow,

But

But if my ignorance were so great,
 that I could not remoue these inconue-
 niences: yet notwithstanding, are you
 and all Christians bounde to receiue
 with all humilitie this true doctrine;
 and to blame me not, the doctrine, if I
 be not able to cleare it of all those things,
 which in the iudgement of man may
 seeme absurde: And although it is not
 my purpose, to examine all, that Philoso-
 phers and others say against the gover-
 ning of euery thing by the providence of
 God, yet in my minde, all that they can
 say against it, may by this one argu-
 ment be easily ouerthrowne. If he be a
 God (which they all confesse, & though
 they would denie it, yet may it easilie
 be proued against them) hee is a most
 perfect thing: but that which is most per-
 fect, hath nothing perfecter then it selfe,
 neither can we imagine any thing to be
 more perfect, then that which of it selfe,
 is truly and absolutely most perfect:
 therefore there is nothing, neither can
 we imagine any thing to be more perfect
 then God: here vpon I inferre, if God did
 not gouerne al things in general, & euery
 thing in particular, wee might well
 imagine

imagine that there was something more perfect then God: and such a diety. which had charge and care of euerie particular thing: but it is shewed that no such diety or God-head can be imagined.

It is false therefore, that they heretofore would infer that God by his providence ruleth not euerie particular thing, & the contrarie is true, which we teach: for else surely that God, which they dreame of to line idelis, & at ease, and to haue no care of any thing, as they babble, is not in truth a God, but as Tullye sometime said of their maister Epicurus, so say I of them, that they in wordes acknowledge a God, but in truth deny that there is any. But leauing Philosophers, let vs see what the Scripture teacheth vs: the first place I wil vse for the prooofe of this Doctrine, I take out of y^e Epistle to the Hebrues the 1. Chapter. verse. 3. Where it is saide of the Soueraine of God, that He beareth vp, that is, moueth and gouerneth all things by his mightie worde: he that granteth that he ruleth all thinges, excepteth no one thing from his gouernement: wee may then well conclude out of this place of God,

God, that God governeth all, and every thing.

But lest I should leave any starting hole for the aduersarie to winde out at, let vs further see what the Scripture teacheth vs of the governing of every particular thing by Gods providence.

Neither will I heape vp many places, but content my selfe with a few examples, out of which the truth of this doctrine may be gathered.

And thus I do endeavour to proue it briefly: All the creatures of God are either indued with the gift of free choise, or els want this libertie of choise: they that haue it, are Angels, both good and euill, and men also both good and euill: they that want this libertie of choise, are all other liuing things created by God, and also those his creatures which haue no life: and yet of all these creatures, God hath a speciall care, so as hee disposeth of every one of them according to his pleasure.

The booke of Iob, and the Psalmes, do very often handle this argument, so that if I should gather out of them all their proofes, I should write out almost their

their whole booke : yet some I will bring , and leaue the rest for you to gather, hoping it will be a meane to bring you to the often reading of them.

In the 147. Psalm the Prophet saith thus of God, that he covereth the Heauen with cloudes, and prepareth raine for the earth, and maketh the grasse to growe vpon the mountaines: But the cloudes, the raine, and the grasse are things without soule and life, and yet by his wonderfull prouidence he directeth, and ruleth at his pleasure the cloudes in the aire: he sendeth the raine downe vpon the earth, and he maketh the grasse to grow: In the 148. Psalm the Prophet saith, that fire and haile, snow, and vapours, stormie windes do execute his worde, and what is it to execute the worde of God, but to be ruled and gouerne by his worde, it is to be at his becke and pleasure: Again, in the 135. Psalm, it is said, that whatsoeuer pleased the Lord, that did he in heauen and in earth, in the Sea, and all the depthes: he bringeth vp the cloudes from the endes of the earth, and maketh the lightnings

lightnings with the raine, he draweth
 forth the windes out of his treasures:
 and Christ our Saviour in the 6. of
 Math. biddeth vs learne how the Lil-
 lies of the field do growe, they labour
 not neither spin: and a little afterward
 he telleth vs, that God doth cloath the
 grasse of the field: these fewe places
 proue that God hath a prouident care,
 to keepe and gouerne euen his lifelesse
 creatures, not onely generally, but
 also particularly: as cloudes, raine,
 windes, grasse, fire, haile, snow, va-
 pours, lillies, and such like: the like
 prouident care he hath for other of his
 creatures, whome hee hath indued
 with life and sence, but not with reason
 and that libertie of choise, whereof I
 spake before: Wee reade in the 147.
 Psalm, that God giueth to beasts
 their foode, and to the yong Rauens
 that crie: and in the 104. Psalm vers.
 14. the Prophet saith, that God cau-
 seth grasse to growe for the cattell,
 and afterward in the 27. verse hee saith,
 that all beasts, foules, and fishes, waite
 vpon thee O Lord that thou maist giue
 them food in due season: thou giuest

B

it to

it to them, and they gather it, thou openest thy hand and they are filled with good things: This also our Saviour Christ affirmeth in the 6. of Mathew, saying, beholde the foules of the Heauen, for they sowe not, neither reape, nor carye into the barnes: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. And in the 10. of Math. Are not two Sparrowes sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father? meaning God: by these few places you may see it sufficiently proued, that God hath a prouident care of euery particular creature, vpon whom he hath not bestowed y free libertie of choise, whether they haue not life, or haue life and sence and want reason. Now as for those creatures to whom God hath giuen that gift of free choise, which I said were Angels and men, some do thinke, that God in truth hath a speciall prouident care ouer man, whom hee made after his owne Image and likenes: but not ouer other creatures: which opinion how false it is, you may easily gather out of that I haue already written. Others do make

this

this to be the difference betweene man
 and man, that God taketh a speciall care
 of the godly, but casteth away all care of
 the wicked: but the worde of God doth
 manifestly ouerthrow this opinion: In
 the 5. of Math. Christ our Sauour
 teacheth vs, that our heauenly Father
 maketh his Sun to arise on the euil and
 on the good, and sendeth raine on the
 iust and vniust: And Paul in his first
 Epistle to Timothy the 4. chapter, saith
 that God is Sauour of al men, special-
 ly of those that beleue: wherof I gather
 that God hath a speciall care of those
 that are his, but yet not so, as that hee
 leaueth y wicked to be ruled by chance
 & fortune: for if God haue a care of those
 things and creatures that the wicked
 possesse, as of their cattell, grasse, and
 cozne, and such like: surely hee prou-
 ideth also for them, the owners & masters
 of those creatures: neither can he be
 prouident & carefull for the godly, but he
 must also gouerne, and rule the wick-
 ed according to the pleasure of his di-
 uine power. For as a Prince
 and Generall of an armie is not
 onely carefull for the troupes and
 2 companies

companies of Souldiers that be in his host: but also for munitiō & vittaille necessarie for the, that hee may haue his army so furnished, that it may be a terroꝝ to the enemye, and may keepe them amongst whome he lieth incamped in such dutifull obedience, that they may be ready to doe whatsoeuer his Capitaines and officers commaund them: so can it not be that God doth prouide for his Church, but he must also moderate and gouerne all those things, without which his Church cannot be here vpon the earth.

Such things as appertaine to the nourishment, cloathing, safe and quiet harboꝝing of the members of the Church: They therefore who are not of the true Church, are yet, for the benefit of Gods Church, to be ruled by his prouidence, so are the Patriarches saide to haue founde fauour in the eyes of infidelles, for that the Lord did rule and moue the hearts of infidelles, which way it pleased him.

Now how God ruleth not onely euery particular man, but also all the seuerall actions of men, is proued by
that

that which is in the 16 of the Proverbs,
 Commit thy workes vnto the Lord,
 and thy thoughts shall be directed:
 And by that also which is in the 4. of
 Iames: goe to now ye that say, to day
 or to morrow wee will goe into such
 a Citie, and continue there a yeare,
 and buy and sell and get gaine: and
 yet ye cannot tell what shall be to
 morrow: for what is your life? it is e-
 uen a vapour, it appeareth for a little
 time, and afterward vanquisheth a-
 way: for that we ought to say, if the
 Lord will, and if wee liue we will doe
 this or that: Thus Iames speaking of
 the actions or doings of men, affirmeth
 that God ruleth them all, so that with-
 out his will wee can doe nothing, no
 not so much as passe from one place to
 another: and Paul coufesseth that hee
 was often hindzed and staied by God,
 that he could not goe to those Churches
 hee purposed, vntill hee had his iourney
 graunted him by the will of God: God
 therefore ruleth all the seuerall actions
 of all men. I will vse onely two exam-
 ples, to illustrate and make plaine this
 most true doctrine, that God gouerneth

the seuerall actions of all men, both good and bad : In the histozie of Ioseph many things to this purpose are to bee founde : the end of that histozie was that which Ioseph spake of, Genesis 50. you thought euill against me saith hee to his brethren, but God disposed it to good : In this histozie these men and their seuerall actions are to be wa yed: First father Iacob, then the brethren of Ioseph, Ioseph himselfe, the Ishmaelites to whom hee was sold, that light huswife his mistris Putiphars wife, Pharao and his seruants : the actions of all these persons are diuers and very different one from another, some of them were laudable, others detestable, and yet some of those better then others, and some of those actions neither to be altogether allowed nor dispraised, & yet as Ioseph witnesseth, God by his prouidence ruleth & disposeth them all, both men and their actions to Iosephs good.

So as Dauid saith, Psalme 105. that God sent a man before them, Ioseph was sold for a slaue : For so God gouerneth the wicked actions of those men,

men, that the moste peruerse practises
of Iosephs bzethzen, the shamelesse
and beastly part of Putiphar, wife,
and other heauie actions, had a most
happie ende : so that euen those things
that they did to Ioseph, purposing by
them vtterly to destroy him, brought
Ioseph to great honour : so mightie
and wonderfull is God, that he is able
to make the light to shine out of dark-
nesse more ouer in the last chapter of
the prophesie of Ionas, wee shall see
how wonderfully God doth not only go-
uerne men, but also all manner of crea-
tures sensible & vn sensible: for I reade
that Ionah went out of the Citie of Ni-
niueh, & sat on the East side of y Citie,
& there made him a booth & sat vnder it
in the shadow till he might se what should
be don to the Citie: and the Lord prepa-
red a Gourd, & made it to come vp ouer
Iona's, that it might bee a shadow o-
uer his head, and deliuer him from
his grieffe: so Ionah was exceeding
glad of the Gourd. But God prepa-
red a worme when the morning
rose the next day, and it smote
the Gourd that it withered: and
when

when the Sunne did arise, God prepared also a feruent East winde, and the Sunne beate vpon the head of Ionah, that hee fainted, and wished in his heart to dye, and said It is better for mee to dye then to liue: in this that I haue written out of Ionas wee haue these things to waye: First Ionah a man, the most excellentest creature, the other baser creatures, as the Gourd, the worrne, and the winde: The worrne is a creature that hath life in it, and is of that kinde of beasts that be deuided in their bodies, the head and breast from their belly and taile, the Gourd and the wind they are creatures without life, and yet you see how God by his prouidence ruleth and moueth at his pleasure all these creatures. If Epicurus had bene at this sight, hee would haue ascribed all to chaunce: if Aristotle, to naturall causes: if Chrysippus or Zeno Stoicks, to fate and to destinie: if Plato to some petty god: and amongst them all there had not bene one worde of the trueth of God.

But the holy Ghost attributeth the course of governing all these things to
 God

God alone , who prepared them all for
 Ionah his good : for by these meanes,
 Ionah that was wandring , was set in
 the right way , as if you will reade the
 chapter you may see more fully of that
 which I haue already written. I may
 safely conclude, that both all the crea-
 tures which want the gift of choise , and
 all they that haue it, are gouerned and
 ruled by God , by his most high and
 mightie prouidence.

Of the Angels , which I placed at
 the first amongst those creatures , that
 haue the libertie of choise , I will write
 now the lesse , hoping that I shall haue
 this backe againe to view, polish , and
 enlarge : but their name teacheth vs
 that they are ruled by God him selfe,
 for they are called Angeli Angels , that
 is, messengers sent from God : and in
 the Epistle to the Hebrewes are called
 the ministers , and seruants of God .

Thus much for the first parte , that
 is for the truth of this doctrine , that
 God by his prouidence ruled all things
 in generall , and euey particular thing
 in particular.

Now come I to that I promised to
 handle

handle in the second place , namely to the unfolding and answering of those arguments which are made against this doctrine. The first argument they make is this : God cannot governe all things generally , and euery creature and action without exceeding toile and grieife of minde : But it agreeth with the nature of God , that he rest in quiet and be free from all labours : Therefore God doth not governe all and euery particular thing.

To this argument drawne thus from the nature of God , I answer, that their first proposition is false, which is that God cannot governe all things generally and particularly without exceeding toile, and grieife of minde: but so; that I will not onely deny it as false, but shew the reasons that moue me so to doe, you must know that there are diuers kindes of actions, some are naturall, some are violent, or ther some meane: that is neither altogether naturall , no; altogether violent: naturall actions are they that doe flowe from the principles of nature it selfe, without any helpe elsewhere: such are
the

the round motions of the heauens, the
flowing and ebbing of the sea, that
light things doe of their naturall light-
nesse mount vpward, heauie things fall
downeward, that we breath and such
like: these actions are done without any
labour, because they mooue of them-
selues without any other helpe: Other
actions there are, which are done by
force, and therefore are called violent,
as by force to make a stone mount vp-
ward, whose nature is to fall downe-
ward. And such like violent actions,
which cannot longe last as Aristotle
teacheth, because they are done with
force. There is another sort of actions
which I called meane, whose be-
ginnings are of nature, but yet
they cannot be done vlesse they be
helped by some other meanes, as to
eate, to drinke, to walke, and such
like. But now that, that God doth,
hee doth without labour, because
hee doth it naturally, and therefore
most freely: againe, there is no
force that can compell God, and
therefore hee worketh of himselfe
freely without any compulsion:
neither

neither is hee troubled with greifes, but gouerneth all things according to the rule of his will : neither is there any thing more agreeable to the nature of God , then to gouerne , and preserue the whole worlde , euen with the worde of his power.

A second argument of theirs is this, It is an vnmeete thing for God , and cleane repugnant to his nature, to entermiddle in filthy , and vncleane matters: but hee cannot gouerne euery seuerall creature , and their actions, but hee must entermiddle with many vncleane, and filthy matters : therefore hee doth not gouerne them.

I denie the second proposition, which is, that God cannot gouerne euery seuerall creature and their actions, but he must mingle himselfe with many vncleane, and filthy matters : For that amongst the creatures , and their actions, there are many vncleane things: this consequence , though it bee the grounde of the proposition is false, for although the power of God is in all his creatures , and ruled all , yet doth it not therefore follow , that the nature
of

of God doth enter in meddle with the vn-
 pure actions of his creatures, which
 may be made plaine by this similitude:
 the Sunne of all visible creatures most
 excellent (man onely excepted) doth
 most set forth the glory of God: it doth
 shine in euery place, so that it shineth of-
 ten vpon the dunghill, and though the
 beames thereof do heat the dunghill, as
 they do all other places, and thinges
 which they peirce, Yet for all that the
 Sunne is not polluted with the defile-
 ments and vncleanesse of it, neither
 doth the substance of the beames of the
 Sunne mingle it selfe with those
 things which it pearceth.

When one laid this in Diogenes
 his dish, that he went into a stews or
 brothels house, why saith hee the Sun
 comineth thither also, and yet is not
 defiled therewith: therby shewing,
 a wise & godly man though he enter into
 vncleane and filthie places, and come
 into the companie of filthie persons,
 doth not forthwith ioyne himselfe to
 their filthinesse, neither is infected with
 their vices: If therefore this Philoso-
 pher could enter into the stews, and
 come

come forth againe vnspotted with their vncleanesse, so that their filthinesse could not fasten vpon him: much lesse is God (whose nature is most pure and simple in gouerning of his creatures) infected with their filthinesse. There is a third obiection, which they thus frame: Euery wise and good gouernour, vnlesse hee be greatly hindred, bzingeth his worke that hee frameth, and that thing that he ruleth to a good, perfect and wished ende: this may bee proued by many examples, as by the example of a skilfull Pilot, who directeth and bzingeth his ship to the purposed hauen, and such like: but nothing can let God from perfecting his workes, and yet many of his creatures, as many monsters, mad men, lame, are imperfect. Therefore God ruleth not euery generation and conception: to vnlose this knot wee must remember this distinction of order: there are two sorts of orders or courses that God taketh in gouerning all things: the one of them wee may call ordinary, which God doth often vse, the other extraordinary, with which order though we be not acquainted,

ted, yet doth God himselfe know the cause why he so worketh: & yet of this may we not conclude, that God in his workes is contrarie to himselfe: for if to vs there appeare some diuersitie and difference in the gouernement of all things by God, certainly that difference is not of Gods rule, but of the unstable iudgement of our troubled mindes: for Gods workes are not to be balanced by our iudgements, which are deceauable, and for the most part vnttrue: Augustine proposed the example of two children, one of which is dutifull and louing to his father, the other is a wicked stubberne childe: both their fathers are deadly sick, the good childe prayeth earnestly vnto God, to deliuer his father from his sicknes: the graceles graft thinketh euery hour twenty vntil his father be breathlesse: both their fathers died and that according to Gods appointement and direction.

But now that childe that prayed for the prolonging of his fathers life, highly pleased God: and yet it pleased not God, that his father should liue any longer: and againe, that

that childe that longed for his fathers death, as highly displeased God, and yet it was Gods pleasure that his father too should dye: how cometh it to passe, that that which pleaseeth God may displease him also, and that which displeaseth him, please him? as he was pleased with the good chils kindnesse, but not pleased that his father should liue: and again displeased with y^e vnnaturall part of the lewd childe, and yet pleased with his fathers death.

Surely there is in God a certaine secret ordinaunce which yet is iust, and a certaine ordinance open and manifested, which also is righteous: But certaine idle companions to draw both Augustine and vs into hatred, for this doctrine, obiect against vs, that they cannot perceiue in God this double wil, which we speake of, to witte, a secret and a reuealed will: for they say we all know and you confesse, that God is most plaine without all shew of doublenesse, and therefore his will must be also as plaine, and even so is it, though wee cannot comprehend it: but let them first answer to that which

Augustine

Augustine and wee haue proposed, and
 all they, till they, they must acknowledge
 with vs, that this difference
 of will, of which I haue spoken, is not
 properly in God, but in vs, who ac-
 cording to our reach and capacity mea-
 sure diuine matters: and therefore in
 respect of vs and of our capacity, there se-
 meth to be this difference in the will of
 God: According to our censure and
 iudgement, we will iudge the birth of
 monsters, mad men, and crooked men,
 to be an imperfect worke of God: but in
 the iudgement of God their creation is
 most perfect and absolute.

If Aristotle were asked what the
 cause were of their imperfections and
 deformities, he would answer y they
 proceeded of a defect, and wat in nature.
 But Christ saith otherwise of the man
 that was bozne blinde in the 9. of Iohn.
 Neither hath this man sinned, nor his
 parents, but that the workes of God
 should be shewed on him: that is, that
 God might be glorified by him. Now
 since the last end of al things is the glory
 of God, and since all those things are to
 be accounted perfect, which attaine to
 their

their desired end, and since the glorie of
 God more appeareth by the imperfe-
 ctions of some of his creatures, then if
 hee had made them all in one forme and
 perfection, surely we may not iudge a-
 ny of his workes vnperfect: I graunt
 that if they be considered in themselves,
 there will appeare in them some im-
 perfection: but when they are referred
 to the glorie of God, if they illustrate
 and set it forth, they are euen therefore
 to be accounted perfect: for if no man
 should be mad, if none deformed, none
 lame, none blinde, wee would ascribe
 the perfection of our birth, which wee
 perceiued that all men haue necessarily
 either to nature or to our parents: and
 wee would easily slip into this opinion,
 that wee had our soules also of our pa-
 rents: but since there appeareth such a
 diuersitie in the outward formes of
 creatures, the prouidence of God both
 more clearely appeare by that their dif-
 ference in shape. In the iudgement of
 man, many flies and wormes, and all
 sort of serpents are reputed not onely
 vnprofitable but also hurtfull: But
 the Lord (as Moses sheweth in his
 song)

ing) calleth them his treasures, out
of which hee draweth vengeance for
his enemies, as arrowes out of a qui-

These were the shafts hee shooke
Pharao with: with these Antiochus,
with these Herode was punished:
who therefore will account them un-
profitable, or who superfluous, since
the Lord him selfe hath such bles to
put them to?

There are also in the many profitable
things for man, whereof some we know
not, other some the Philosophers know,
as Nicander & others haue very lear-
nedly written of them: Ancient lear-
ned Chrysostome in his tenth Homily
upon Genesis, vsed this similitude:
if (saith hee) in earthly matters when
wee see these things that be done, ap-
proved by graue and mightie men,
wee mislike not their censure nor
gainsay it, but preferre their iudge-
ment before our own: how much more
should we carry the same minde of all
visible creatures, which we know that
God the creator of all thinges made?
That since wee haue receaued his

censure of them all , that all that hee made was wery good, let vs suspende our iudgements & bury them in silence, and let vs not dare to prefer the iudgements of all men befoze the Lords: and wee may perswade our selues with strong and sufficient arguments , that the Lord made all things in great wisdom and mercy , and in a worde , that the Lord made nothing vnadvisedly or without cause: but though we know not the causes of his workes , because of the weakenesse of our vnderstandings: yet hath hee made all things according to his wisdom and most mightie mercy.

Thus farre Chrysostome: If therefore by the testimonie of Aristotle , nature made nothing in vaine, As that man who was vtterly ignorant of true religion affirmed of nature, which he yet iudged to be both blinde and brutish: how much more are we bound to attribute vnto the most wise creator of all things this perfection in his creation, that he made nothing in vaine, but all things in great wisdom: since all his workes redounded to his glory , which is the

last, and the cheifest end of all things,
 and by the common consent of all men,
 euery thing is iudged either perfect or
 imperfect, by the attaining of his ende?
 There is a fourth argument, thus made
 against the prouidence of God: If God
 who is most wise and righteous in his
 iudgements, doe gouerne all things,
 euery particular thing there shold not
 be so great troubles in comon wealths,
 and specially in the Church, whereof
 the Lord hath a speciall care, for that it
 is his Sanctuarie: but both in Church
 and common-wealth there is great vn-
 quietnesse, so that all lawes both diuine
 and humane are openly violated: good
 men most cruelly are delte withall, e-
 uill men do reioyce and triumphe in
 their wickednesse without controle-
 ment: God therfore gouerneth not all
 things that are in common-wealths and
 in the Churches.

This argument thus drawne from
 the nature of Gods iustice (which se-
 meth to be contrary to his gouernement
 by his prouidence, if he shold see, mode-
 rate, and suffer all these outrages and
 disorders) is one of the cheifest proppes

of Epicurus his opinion : And this argu-
 ment troubleth many that now liue,
 dayly labour to bringe Epicurus name
 in obloquie with all men, & yet are con-
 tent to liue like Epicures : and this ar-
 gument also the Turkes, and our capi-
 tall enemies (the papists) obiekt most a-
 gainst vs : and sure it carrieth such
 waight with it, that Dauid confelleth
 that he was so astonied, that his feete
 were almost gone : & his steppes had wel-
 nere slipt, when hee saw the prosperitie
 of the wicked, and punishments and
 hard entertainement of the godly, vn-
 till he went into the sanctuarie of God :
 then vnderstoode he their ende, that is
 vntill Dauid entered into Gods schoole,
 & learned by his worde & holy spirit, that
 he ordered all things most wisely, & ius-
 tly. After Pompey had bene put to the
 worst in the battaile fought betwixt
 Cæsar and him, in the confines of Phar-
 salos, and escaped by flight to Mytilene,
 he went to Cratippus, and disputed
 with the Philosopher in his garden,
 whether he thought there was any God
 which by his prouidence ruled in earth :
 and so; that befoze in very bad quarels
 hee

he had had most prosperous successe, as
 when he had subdued, and in battaile
 conquered the inhabitants of the East
 part of the worlde, and was now in a
 most good cause overcome, stripped of
 his armie, and forced to flie away him-
 self alone most shamefully: he hereof ga-
 thered that God regarded not what was
 done amongst men, but y all things were
 done by chace. Thus doth the wise mē of
 the world iudge & speake of such euent.
 But the holy ghost teacheth vs to iudge
 otherwise of them: When Moses in
 his song Deut. 32. was to deliuer to the
 people the threatnings of God, if they
 were disobedient, which afterward the
 rebellious Israelites felt, he bleth this
 reface: Perfect is the work of the migh-
 ty God: for all his waies are iudge-
 ment: God is true & without wicked-
 nes, iust and righteous is he: teaching
 hereby that whatsoeuer the world
 doth prate of the causes of affli-
 ctions, that God with great wis-
 dome, doth sende forth of his trea-
 sures all sortes of calamities:
 some-time by them to punish the
 wicked, sometime to exercise the godly
 with

with them. For the sinnes of the people
the hypocrite doth raigne: that is, tyrant
sit in the throne of Justice, which
under pretence of executing iustice, are
but hypocrites and oppresse the people.
Iob 34. verse 30.

Woe be to thee (saith the Prophet
Isaiah) which spoilest, for thou
shalt be spoiled: And indeed, one ty-
rant plagueth another, & though tyrants
be a plague to all nations & Kingdomes,
yet are they themselves in due time
in like sort punished by other tyrants.
In the person of Sennacherib the iud-
gements of God are very lively set
forth by the prophet Isaiah in the tenth
Chapter of his prophesie: The Lord
directeth vp the King of the Assyrians to
punish the eastern people: Sennacherib
was a wicked man, and he is a scourge
to wicked people, yea hee cruelly be-
red the people of God, hee spoileth al-
most all Palestina, he beseigeth Ierusa-
lem the cheife Citie of that country:
And thus saith God of him by the Pro-
phet in that place: O Ashur the rod of
my wrath and the staffe in their hands
is mine indignation: I wil send him to a
dissem-

dissembling nation , and I will giue
 him a charge against the people of my
 wrath , to take the spoile, and to take
 the pray, and to treade them vnder-
 foote like the mire in the streete . But
 he thinketh not so, neither doth his
 heart esteeme it so: and so forth. And a
 little after, thus saith God by the Pro-
 phet of him: But when the Lord hath
 accomplished all his worke vpon
 Mount Sion and Ierusalem, I will visit
 the fruite of the proude heart of the
 King of Ashur, and his glorious and
 proud lookes, Because hee said, by the
 power of min own hand haue I done
 it, and by my wisdom, because I am
 wise: And a little after this, thus saith
 the Prophet, Shal the axe boast it selte
 against him that heweth therewith? If
 Pompey had looked on this example,
 thus laide forth by the Prophet, hee
 might haue bene better occupied & in-
 structed, the he was by his toying with
 Cratippus: and this would haue
 taught him, that though the Lord suf-
 fereth tyrantes to bee for a time a
 plague to any nation, yet in his appoin-
 ted time hee suffereth them to bee pu-
 nished

nished by other tyrantes, and to haue
 the same measure that they measured
 vnto others: Now if wee compare
 Sennacherib, and Pompey that glo-
 ried in this Title The greate: which
 name Silla gaue him for his victories:
 wee shall finde many things a like in
 their histories. Both of them was an
 are in the hand of God to strike the
 people of the East: both of them destroy-
 ed Palestina, and afflicted the people
 of God: Sennacherib beseiged Jerusa-
 lem, Pompey tooke it, the Assirian
 was put to flight by an Angel, and was
 slaine in his temple, that is in his san-
 ctuarie, by his owne Sonnes: Pompey
 was put to flight by Cæsar, and flying
 to Ptolomie King of Egypt, whose fa-
 ther being dispossessed of his Kingdome,
 he had restored againe to his crowne, &
 therefore Ptolomie should haue bene as
 a sonne vnto Pompey, was there in E-
 gypt with him miserably slaine. So
 vnsearchable are the waies of Gods
 iudgements: for that which Michah
 speaketh of the Caldeans in the 4. chap.
 of his prophesie: They know not the
 thoughts of the Lord, they vnder-
 stand

stand not his counsell, therefore they shall be thrashed as sheaves in the barne, may be spoken of all these Giants and proude tyzantes, whofo: that they know not the counsaile of the Lord, shall in his appointed time beare the punishment of their pride: Neither doth the holy Ghost teache vs, that the wicked onely are punished, but that the Church of God is also afflicted thoughfo: another ende and purpose: And there may many reasons be brought, to shew why the Church of God is subiect to so many calamities, but I will at this time alleadge onely three, by which as by many other wee may know, that the Lord in truth and iudgement, doth exercise his Church with afflictions. The first is that so long as we cary about with vs this burthen of corruption, we are not onely subiect to sinne, but doe continually by sinning prouoke the Lorde to deale in iustice with vs: And therefore it is agreable to the iustice of God, that wee bee chastened of the Lord with a fatherly rod, which may keepe vs in obedience: yea wee must all say

say with Ieremy in the third chapter of his Lamentations, verse 22. It is the Lords mercies, that wee are not consumed, because his compassions faile not.

My seconde reason is this : It is best for vs to bee humbled vnder the mightie hand of God : for wee know how scirce and haughtie minded we are by nature, so that it is necessarie for vs, that God keepe vs vnder his schooling, and so haue vs in some awe : Therefore David saith in the 119. Psalme, ver. 67. Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I keepe thy word. And ver. 71. It is good for me that I haue bene afflicted, that I may learne thy statutes. The third reason is deliuered by Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians the 11. Chapter verse 32. When wee are iudged wee are chastned of the Lord, because wee would not be condemned with the world : Therefore let vs conclude this whole discourse with Moses thus : The iudgements of the Lord are true and righteous, neither let vs measure them according to our own cōceit & iudgemēt which are

are very deceauable, but let vs know
 that the godly are punished for their
 sinnes they dayly commit, that they
 may be humbled, and that they perish
 not with the wicked: but God in pu-
 nishing the wicked, doth shewe and o-
 pen the treasures of his long sufferance,
 patience and iustice: but when hee af-
 flicteth vs, he maketh vs like to his
 owne Sonne Christ, and stirreth vp
 in vs an earnest desire to be dissolued
 and to be with Christ.

Let vs in the meane time giue
 our selues to hartly and
 earnest prayers, pray-
 ing continually
 with the
 Saints of
 God:

Come Lord Iesus, yea come quickly.
 Amen. Amen.



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